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The first of a two-part evaluation of correspondence studies in the State of Washington was concerned with opinion, descriptions, and recommendations of faculty at four state institutions on (1) how the faculty member is affected personally, (2) how students are affected, and (3) program improvement. Interviews collected data from 100 faculty members, who were categorized as those who had or had not taught by correspondence in the past, or were currently teaching. A need was found for better remuneration and for professional recognition for correspondence teaching. The administration should specify the institutional commitment to correspondence studies, the resources it will allocate, and the recognition and reward it will give to participating faculty. All faculty felt that the State had a definite commitment to its citizens to provide correspondence courses. Correspondence programs might be made more effective by establishing a central organization for correspondence and continuing education services; by eliminating duplications in the state; or by inviting the participation of the community colleges. The State should provide monetary support for correspondence courses for college credit. (pt)

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UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Office of Institutional Educational Research

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CORRESPONDENCE STUDY: FACULTY EVALUATION

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I. SUMMARY

This report is the first phase of a two-phase study for the evaluation of correspondence studies in the State of Washington. The data in Phase I are the descriptions and recommendations made by faculty members when they were asked to evaluate correspondence studies. The data, collected from the faculty at four of the state institutions, are broken down into three major sections of faculty opinion toward correspondence studies: (1) opinion related to how the faculty member is affected personally, (2) opinion related to how the students are affected, and (3) recommendations for the improvement of the correspondence program. Editorial comments and recommendations have been interspersed throughout the report and are found in closed square brackets.

The section concerning how the faculty member is affected personally contains descriptions and recommendations about remuneration, professional advancement, flexibility of instructor time, and instructor motivation. The second section gives faculty descriptions and recommendations about student motivation and the quality and performance of students taking courses by correspondence. The final section presents faculty recommendations for improving the program of correspondence studies, e.g., recommendations for departmental and division action, recommendations concerning who the responsibility for correspondence studies should be vested in, and recommendations for ways the correspondence program might be coordinated for more efficient operation.

The data in IER-127 indicate that the major areas of concern toward correspondence studies by faculty members are centered around the need for greater remuneration and recognition for teaching by correspondence. Faculty also suggested a need for better communication channels between themselves and the students, and between themselves and the administrators of the correspondence studies program, i.e., the department chairmen and the divisions of correspondence studies.

More specifically, the data in this report can be partially summarized as follows:

1. It would be desirable to pursue a strong and concerted effort to inform faculty and departmental chairmen about the potentialities in correspondence courses. Unless whole-hearted support of the faculty can be engendered, the future of correspondence studies appears to be dismal.
2. Instructors should be encouraged to innovate. Too many seem bound to the traditional methods of teaching by correspondence.
3. Release-time from regular teaching responsibilities should be obtained for revising or, hopefully, for rewriting syllabi for courses.
4. Release-time from regular teaching responsibilities should be sought for faculty teaching by correspondence.
5. Some sort of recognition should be given to those who devote time to correspondence study in terms of promotion, tenure, salary, etc.

6. It would be desirable to have the opportunity for better communication with students for instructional and motivational purposes.
7. The divisions and the departments should periodically define the goals and functions of the correspondence courses to serve as guidelines for instruction and evaluation.
8. There should be frequent revisions of courses and frequent reviews of textbooks.
9. Each department should have a regular faculty member whose full-time responsibility would be to coordinate correspondence courses offered by that department.
10. The responsibility for lower-division correspondence studies should be reevaluated in view of the rapidly increasing role of community colleges in lower-division instruction.

II. INTRODUCTION

In early November, 1967, Dean Lloyd Schram and Dr. Richard Wilkie requested that the University of Washington's Office of Institutional Educational Research conduct an evaluation of correspondence studies as a vehicle for instruction. The study was to encompass two phases: (1) an evaluation of correspondence studies from the standpoint of faculty members, and (2) an evaluation of students' attitudes towards correspondence study.

Shortly thereafter, Dean Schram arranged a meeting of all of the five directors of correspondence study divisions in the state. At that meeting, the possibility of including all of the institutions was explored. As a result the University of Washington, Washington State University, Eastern Washington State College, and Central Washington State College were included in the study.

Interviews conducted by the staff of the Office of Institutional Educational Research on the campuses of the four participating state institutions were the major sources of information. The assistance given to the Office by the four directors of Correspondence Study in making lists of instructors available and in arranging the interview appointments was indispensable to the success of the study. The assistance of the directors and their staffs is sincerely appreciated. Needless to say, the cooperation of the interviewees was also sincerely appreciated.

This report summarizes the results of the first phase of the study. It is meant to be discursive and will not contain the numerous footnotes characteristic of scholarly reports. In other words, this report will summarize the data-gathering procedures and the major conclusions derived from the more than one hundred interviews.

III. PURPOSE

The purpose of Phase I was to gauge faculty attitudes towards correspondence studies as an instructional medium within an institution's total educational program. These attitudes were focused on the following areas: (1) assessments about the students taking correspondence courses, (2) the faculty's satisfactions/dissatisfactions with correspondence courses, and (3) suggestions for new approaches, revisions, etc.

IV. TWENTY YEARS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

At this juncture, it may be useful to review the recent history of correspondence studies at a typical, large, public, urban, four-year university in the Pacific Northwest. Strangely enough, only one institution fitted those parameters -- the University of Washington.

The history of correspondence studies at the University of Washington shows a continual growth in correspondence activities. By the time it had been made a part of the Division of Adult and Extension Services in 1946, correspondence studies had accumulated $120,000.00 from the operations it had initiated in 1912. The rate of lesson compensation had remained unchanged for 25 years. Dr. George P. Horton, who became the Executive Officer of the Department of Correspondence Study in 1947, proposed that payments to the faculty be increased, that the preparation of a course and the preparation and/or revision of a syllabus be remunerated, and that state support for correspondence activities be obtained.

During the next ten years, tuition was raised in three steps from $4 to $8 per credit hour, and the grading fee to $1 per lesson. In 1952, the Department of Correspondence Study became involved with offering television courses over a local station. The Department met the constant deficits of the TV courses which amounted to several thousand dollars a year until 1959 when this function was assumed by the Department of Continuing Education.

After Dr. Morton Kroll became Director of the Correspondence Division (1960), payments for writing or revising a course were initiated and many of the office's procedures were converted to IBM. Dr. Kroll also proposed (1) a survey and a reorganization of course offerings, (2) an introduction of joint media methods of instruction, which would combine lectures, correspondence, radio and television, (3) an examination of programmed learning, (4) an exploration of continuing education in the professions, (5) an exploration of the use of non-credit continuing education courses, (6) the change of the 30-lesson, five-credit-hours format, (7) the inclusion of correspondence study in an alumni program, (8) the creation of a program in continuing education for public administrators, and (9) the addition of courses with a 499 number (reading under faculty supervision).

Dr. Kroll's next step was to call upon the University to underwrite the use of correspondence study and related methods of instruction as a part of its regular ongoing program. He pointed out that it was

important to dispel the notion that correspondence study was no more than the simple preparation of tedious lessons, their correction, and return with little or no opportunity for genuine intellectual exchanges and creativity on the part of the student and the instructor.

In 1963, a number of programs in adult and extension education were reorganized into the Division of Continuing Education under Dean Schram. In 1965, Dr. Richard Wilkie became the Director of the Division of Correspondence Study. Since 1965, the Division of Correspondence Study has raised the schedule of payments; instituted monthly tallies of new registrations, assignments processed, and assignments outstanding; and initiated a study (conducted by the Institute for Sociological Research) of correspondence registrants.

Continuing problems fall into two major categories. First, because the number of course offerings has decreased, overall enrollments have been diminishing in the last few years. This led to speculation that correspondence study might eventually disappear. The major reason for the diminution in enrollment would appear to be the withdrawal of courses. For example, a large number of education courses were withdrawn due to retirements and a reorganization of the College of Education. That there is still a demand for the withdrawn courses is attested to by the number of course requests received by the Division of Correspondence Study. Among other factors in the decreasing enrollment in correspondence courses are increasing urbanization with a concomitant decrease in the

number of individuals in rural, isolated communities; the expansion of the higher educational system in the United States (some areas which were formally far removed from a four-year institution are now being serviced by community colleges); and the increasing knowledge that only a minority of students enrolled in correspondence courses ever finish the courses.

The second problem arises from the difficulty of recruiting instructors for correspondence study courses. Departmental chairmen who have spent considerable effort to reduce faculty teaching loads are reluctant to permit correspondence instruction by their more advanced members. More faculty involvement is needed in this area (possibly through the use of experimental instructional techniques which give the faculty members a great deal of freedom in the structuring of courses). Going hand in glove, there should be an increased effort to inform faculty members about the possible value of teaching courses by correspondence.

V. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This was the most unfruitful approach utilized in this study. A review of the literature on correspondence study for the last ten years revealed only a few experimental studies aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process involved in teaching a course by correspondence. While use of the correspondence study vehicle

has shown a great increase outside the United States since the Second World War, this growth must be attributed to the congested and over-crowded facilities in the institutions of higher education, and not to any great advancement in correspondence-teaching technology. A number of authors have pointed out that the potential usefulness and adaptability of correspondence study have not been exploited with the imagination and drive that have been expended upon other areas of instruction, e.g., audio-visual education. Because it has been in existence for such a long time and because it has been traditionally characterized as cumbersome and dull, correspondence study has not benefited from sufficient research and experimentation. One healthy trend is the shift in emphasis to independent study on the part of many correspondence study departments. This approach could lead to experimentation and ease the characteristic difficulties in recruitment of correspondence faculty.

VI. PROCEDURE

In the preliminary design of the study, interviews with samples of faculty members at each of the participating institutions were to lead to the construction of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was to be pretested on a sample of faculty at each institution. The pretest of the questionnaire was to be followed by an interview with the testees to ascertain strengths and weaknesses in the preliminary instrument. Then the revamped questionnaire was to be administered to all of the faculty at each of the institutions.

During the course of interviews conducted at the University of Washington, it became apparent that the design and administration of questionnaires would be an added and unnecessary frill which would increase the number of respondents with no increase in the amount of information obtained. A decision was made to dispense with the questionnaires and rely upon a limited number of interviews. It should be emphasized that because there was so little variability in the attitudes or suggestions made by faculty members, a smaller number of respondents yielded data just as reliable as that attainable through a larger sample.

Each participating institution was contacted and interviews were arranged with their faculty members. The faculty were divided into three groups: (1) those who had never taught by correspondence, (2) those who had formerly taught by correspondence but were no longer doing so, and (3) those who were currently teaching by correspondence.

A staff member of the University of Washington's Office of Institutional Educational Research conducted the interviews on the various campuses. Each faculty member was apprized of the general goals of the study and assured that his specific responses would be held in strict confidence, i.e., only general summaries of interview results would be released and the individual's attitudes would <u>not</u> be released to the directors of Correspondence Study on the various campuses.

The interview form underwent a few revisions during the course of the study. Most of the revisions were of a minor nature and faculty

who had already been interviewed were contacted by telephone when major changes were made in the interview format.

It may be necessary to indicate that it is in the very nature of the interview technique when one has a long list of questions and a short interview session that not all questions could be put to all interviewees. The advantages of the interview, however, outweigh the disadvantages. It is, for example, much simpler to elicit verbal responses than written ones especially on questions where little thought had previously been given on the issue.

VII. RESULTS

The interviewed faculty appeared to welcome the opportunity of discussing correspondence study although they were usually quick to say that they doubted whether they had any startling disclosures. They seemed candid in answering even those questions which touched upon matters of personal likes and dislikes.

There were few differences between institutions, i.e., faculty members of one institution had essentially the same things to say as at another. Consequently, other than reporting in Table 1 the number of faculty in the three categories of interviewees, differentiations between institutions will not be made in this report. The interviewees at Eastern and Central Washington State Colleges appeared to be only slightly more student-oriented than at W. S. U or the U. of W. This

was not surprising despite the reputations of faculty members at the state universities of being research oriented because teaching courses by correspondence may well attract student-oriented faculty.

TABLE 1

NUMBER OF FACULTY INTERVIEWED
IN THE THREE FACULTY CATEGORIES
AT THE FOUR INSTITUTIONS

INSTITUTION	CATEGORY			
	Now Teaching	Previously Taught	Never Taught	Total
U. of W.	29	13	8	50
W. S. U.	28	8	7	43
E. W. S. C.	13	3	4	20
C. W. S. C.	12	2	4	18
Total	82	26	23	131

There was an over-representation of interviewees who were teaching by correspondence in the sample. The reasons were rather simple. First, it is probable that those still teaching by correspondence would have opinions based on what was happening and they would be most likely to have thought about changes which might be made. Second, those who had never taught by correspondence had, on the whole, never thought about the role of correspondence studies. /Editorial Comment: It is interesting to note that these faculty members had very similar views of changes in correspondence instruction to those who had had experience in the area./ Third, many of those who had formerly taught were either no longer on campus,

were on leaves of absence, or had taught so many years before the interview that their opinions had to be discounted and treated within the category of those who had never taught by correspondence. Since there were time limitations, the bulk of the interview efforts were channeled towards faculty members who were teaching courses by correspondence.

There were few differences between the three groups of faculty about the direction which should be taken by correspondence study divisions.

Although the opinions of the interviewees were obtained through a relatively unstructured interview, faculty concerns could be categorized into three major areas: (1) how faculty were affected personally, (2) concern for the student in correspondence studies, and (3) the improvement of the correspondence program. Concern was expressed in the forms of descriptions and/or recommendations. Reported below are the views of the interviewees toward these three areas.

A. FACULTY OPINION: PERSONAL

1. Remuneration

a. Faculty Description

Remuneration was frequently mentioned as a minor satisfaction by instructors. They felt that the remuneration did not provide sufficient compensation for the extravagent expenditures of time

and effort necessary to correct lessons and prepare syllabi and/or lessons. One chain-smoking instructor mentioned that he couldn't even pay for his vice out of the income from his correspondence activities.

Although it was often claimed that remuneration was not a critical factor, it is doubtful that the faculty as a whole would carry out their efforts gratis.

b. Faculty Recommendations

(1) If the correspondence program is sufficiently important to be continued, financial and professional rewards should be substantially increased.

(2) The remuneration system should be revised since an increase in financial rewards would not be possible within the current structure of correspondence studies. [Editorial Comment: Since the early lessons generally require more faculty time for corrections, suggestions, etc., than do later lessons, they might be given more remuneration than later ones.]

(3) Finally, the interviewees suggested that increased payments might be used as a lever to urge instructors to be even more conscientious in correcting lessons. [Editorial Comment: More remuneration for the early lessons might also be used to motivate instructors to be more detailed in correcting them.]

2. Professional Gains

a. Faculty Description

Many faculty felt that teaching by correspondence resulted in an improvement in their competence in communicating ideas, keeping up to date, being challenged by students' questions, and experimenting with different teaching techniques.

On the negative side, many instructors complained that little or no professional recognition was given for correspondence instruction. Some termed correspondence studies as "moonlighting with offical sanction," while others defended correspondence studies as work which required a high order of academic knowledge and which benefited the institution directly. Unfortunately, neither the instructors' peers nor their academic departments seemed to understand the benefits of correspondence instruction. Finally, teaching by correspondence takes time which necessarily means less time for research which results in fewer publications.

b. Faculty Recommendations

There are no apparent solutions to these problems. The issue of research and publications is deeply enmeshed in the academic system and would be extremely difficult to change. Whether the negative aspects outweigh the positive would seem to be an individual matter. However, unless something is done to diminish the negative aspects mentioned by the instructors, correspondence divisions will continue to experience difficulties in attracting faculty.

/ Editorial Comment: It was readily apparent to the interviewers that the lack of professional recognition, advancement, and remunerational opportunities were the critical negative factors associated with teaching by correspondence. /

3. Time Flexibility

a. Faculty Description

Flexibility in the use of the instructor's time was often cited as an advantage since the correspondence study program, within certain limits, allowed the instructor to decide when he would correct lessons. While the flexibility of time existed during the year, the heaviest load in many courses occurred during the summer months when instructors were more free from competing activities and were able to devote themselves more fully to their correspondence courses. It was stressed by some, however, that correspondence instruction tied them to the campus during the summer and prevented the use of the summer in what might be a more professionally productive way.

b. Faculty Recommendations

Although flexibility of time was viewed as a great advantage, suggestions were made to make it even more advantageous. (1) Forward lessons (perhaps by registered mail) when the instructor is away from campus for an extended time period. (2) Inform the students of the instructor's vacation schedule so that they will not expect to receive their lessons during that period.

4. Self-motivation

a. Faculty Description

Many instructors said they were pleased to have an opportunity to help a large variety of students with diverse vocations in many parts of the world. Also the opportunity to encourage a few exceptional students to do outstanding work and to continue their educations, occasionally to the doctorate level, was mentioned as sufficient compensation for the inherent drudgery of teaching mediocre students. In this respect, these rewards were viewed as identical to those obtained from discovering and encouraging exceptional students on campus.

On the negative side, many instructors find correspondence courses a poor substitute for classwork. In addition, they likened teaching by correspondence to slave labor -- menial, dull, clerical work, a drudgery, a headache, a chore.

The issue of teacher-student interaction received a great deal of attention. Instructors indicated that they missed the personal confrontation and challenge of the classroom, i.e., the face-to-face contact, which permitted immediate feedback and reaction to the quality of instruction, and the opportunity of giving stimulation and encouragement to live and vibrant bodies who were persons rather than non-entities with names attached to lessons.

Instructors were also concerned that correspondence studies involved a lower quality of instruction than resident instruction. /Editorial Comment: After all, correspondence lacked the benefit of the sterling quality and enthusiasm of the in-the-flesh instructor./ They were also concerned that there was little incentive for the instructors to do a good job of grading and that, psychologically at least, there seemed little opportunity for creative teaching once a course had been structured and a syllabus written.

B. Faculty Recommendations

(1) By encouraging a correspondence-visitation course such as explored by Dr. Morton Kroll, faculty and student interest might be whetted. Faculty members and students alike would have an opportunity for meaningful face-to-face interaction. An inauguration of systematic conference calls on a scheduled basis could also give the faculty and students a chance for meaningful interaction.

(2) Correspondence instructors should be encouraged by the administration, academic departments, and the Division of Correspondence Studies in every possible way to alleviate low quality instruction and lack of enthusiasm by innovation. Reports of instructional experimentation should be distributed to the correspondence faculty and departmental chairmen. It was suggested that the five Divisions of Correspondence Studies jointly publish a regular newsletter

to all participating faculty which might contain information on enrollments in correspondence courses, number of completions, descriptions of various innovations, and the like.

/ Editorial Comment: Incidentally, instructors took it as a sign of interest and encouragement that this study of correspondence courses was being conducted. /

(3) Satisfaction and morale would increase if the Division of Correspondence Studies would periodically conduct interviews with the faculty to ascertain whether they have any problems and/or suggestions. The results of these anonymous interviews should be distributed to all instructors teaching by correspondence and to other interested parties as well. Satisfaction and morale would also improve if the instructor's individual department would show interest and encourage his work in correspondence studies.

(4) The drudgery of correcting and developing lessons might be alleviated by waiving the traditional and psychologically rigid formula of "X" lessons per credit hour.

B. FACULTY OPINION: STUDENTS

1. Student Motivation

a. Faculty Description

The stereotyped reasons faculty gave for students taking

correspondence courses were: to obtain degree credit, to meet a prerequisite, to take a course in an easier way, [Editorial Comment: Some doubt exists as to whether this is easier], to speed up the possibility of graduating, to take a course overload, to take a course out of the required sequence, to graduate without having to attend, to repeat a failed course, to raise a low GPA, to take a course that had been closed because of heavy enrollment, to gain better mastery over some material than might be possible in a residence class, to escape ennui, or to maintain and improve skills. Of all the complaints, the chief one was that students were interested only in getting the credit instead of showing a genuine desire to improve themselves.

[Editorial Comment: The variety of reasons put forth by faculty indicates that they are aware that students have individual goals for taking correspondence courses and that these goals are often dissonant from those the faculty think students should have.

It is also interesting to note that most of the reasons instructors gave seemed to be based upon the assumption that students were in residence at an institution.

Whether or not these assumptions are tenable could be one of the areas of concern in Phase II of this study.]

b. Faculty Recommendations

As stated above, the opportunity for face-to-face confrontation while taking a course was suggested by many instructors as a means for improving student motivation.

2. Academic Quality and Performance

a. Faculty Description

The academic quality of correspondence students was generally viewed as comparable to that of resident students. Some instructors felt that the best correspondence students actually learned more than those in residence because correspondence courses required more reading and more digesting. In addition, instructors felt that a student could benefit from the forced usage of the written communication medium.

Although many faculty who had never taught by correspondence viewed the academic quality of correspondence students as inferior to resident students, these opinions did not differ markedly from those of instructors who had taught by correspondence.

Some instructors did express concern that many students did not really learn. They cited numerous examples of students who did well in assigned lessons and failed miserably on the final examination. To attribute for these failures, instructors suggested the possibility of collusion between students and the tendency to "lift" the answers out of the assigned reading without having mastered the materials.

A number of instructors also commented that many of the students would send in a number of lessons at the same time so that they could not possibly benefit from their corrected lessons in time to

improve subsequent lessons. In addition, by the time a lesson had been corrected, and returned to the student with comments or questions, the time delay and the lack of a carbon copy makes it difficult for the instructor to respond to the student's responses to a question or comment made on a preceeding lesson.

The difficulties of checking on the progress of students was another subject upon which many instructors commented. Requiring large numbers of written assignments often did not give a good insight into the students' comprehension. Some instructors mentioned that they could find out more quickly and accurately what a student had learned in a five-minute conversation than in the time-consuming (and often unrevealing) practice of reading his lessons.

b. <u>Faculty Recommendations</u>

(1) Some means of determing student motivation would be of interest and utility in estimating the academic quality of correspondence students.

(2) It was suggested that the early lessons be turned in one at a time and that this be specified in the course outline. This would give the instructor some time to comment upon the student's early lessons and to encourage the student to take other tacks. This should be taken in conjunction with an earlier recommendation that the faculty member receive greater remuneration for the earlier lessons than for the later ones.

(3) It was suggested that secretarial help or some means of reproducing the comments and/or questions placed on students' lessons be made available to faculty members. In this way, when the student responds to a comment, the instructor will be able to determine the basis of the response. It would be a relatively simple matter, for example, to set up a telephone line which the instructor could use to have his comments, suggestions, questions, etc., put on tape. They could then be typed by the secretarial staff in the correspondence division.

(4) Although some faculty members deplored the possibilities of collusion between students, others pointed out that it should be encouraged. That is, assuming that two or more students from the same area were taking the same course, intercommunication between them should be encouraged rather than discouraged. It is assumed that by talking with each other each student would, first, learn more about the subject than he otherwise might have, and second, he might be motivated to complete the course by knowing that someone else in his own area was facing some of the same problems. Therefore, it is recommended that allowances be made by the instructors for communication between students who are taking a course by correspondence.

/ Editorial Comment: It would seem reasonable that students taking a correspondence course should be encouraged to discuss their lessons with one another just as students at an institution should be encouraged to discuss class material. It is recognized that a restructuring which provides for the possibility of student interaction would entail a great deal of work by the instructor to revise his course sufficiently.

The academic quality of correspondence enrollees should be investigated on a systematic basis. A check of the H. S. GPA's, ages, sex, and other organismic variables might prove fruitful in determining not only the quality of initial enrollees but also their perserverance.

For instructors who feel that they could more quickly and accurately determine what students have learned in a five-minute conversation, it is suggested that the Division of Correspondence Studies investigate the possibilities of having faculty members call students by telephone and having a discussion with them.

Most of the aforementioned recommendations can be checked with students in Phase II of this study. /

C. FACULTY OPINION: PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Departmental Action

a. The role of correspondence studies should be defined by the administration, departmental chairmen and the faculty. The administration should specify the institutional commitment to correspondence studies, the resources it will allocate, and the recognition and reward it will give to participating faculty. Said one, "if we go, let's go first-class."

The responsibilities of academic departments in mounting and staffing a correspondence program should be defined and evaluated periodically. Strong support by the administration and the deans will be required if the faculty are to be convinced that correspondence studies is an important institutional objective.

If the institution would regard the work done by correspondence instructors as a part of their service responsibilities, the status of correspondence faculty might improve. In addition, an instructor's load in correspondence courses should be viewed as a part of his regular teaching load.

Instructors writing a correspondence course for the first time, as well as an instructor who revises a course, should receive expert help in course outline construction. It was also suggested that the institution examine the present tradition against recog-

nizing the writing or revision of correspondence courses as scholarly work. It is recognized, of course, that the revision should be a major one.

b. Many instructors felt that the academic department should more decisively exercise their influences on the number, content, and evaluation of correspondence courses. However, if the departments were made entirely responsible for the correspondence studies in their fields, it was feared that correspondence courses would disappear entirely from the institutional program. Each department should have a regular faculty member whose full-time responsibility would be to coordinate correspondence courses offered by that department. He might develop a number of adjunct faculty who might teach a course in concert.

2. Division of Correspondence Studies Action

a. Instructors should be informed by the Divisions of Correspondence Studies on how to overcome the "inherent limitations" of correspondence courses. It would be desirable for the Divisions to develop standards of quality which instructors may use in structuring their courses.

Some resolution to the perceived conflict between high standards on campus and lower expectation from correspondence courses -- because of the broader appeal and larger diversification among its students -- must be made. The principal obstacle

is the limited concept that higher education still holds of its role in a free and democratic society.

The divisions and the academic departments must define the desired goals of correspondence studies. Lessons must be constructed carefully to provide an integrative experience. The divisions must determine meaningful evaluative criteria. Once the objectives of a course are specifically defined, those goals attainable by correspondence should be developed. While many instructors would welcome the freedom to innovate, e.g., different formats, and programmed learning, they find it difficult to do so without outside assistance.

b. It was stressed that the particular subject matter must determine the instructional method. Correspondence study is largely home study or independent study, and <u>not</u> busy work. Instructors wanted to find ways of teaching on a more personal basis and the joys of teaching diminished when teaching was done by correspondence. They hoped that the reliance on reading as the exclusive means of receiving information might be changed.

Instructors indicated that they would welcome ways in which communication with the students might be improved, particularly if it did not involve additional work or time.

It was suggested that correspondence studies must counteract the lack of personal contact between the student and the faculty

member to increase student motivation and to increase faculty satisfaction.

c. It was also suggested that the divisions institute an advisory service to insure that students obtain what they desire and are able to profit from the courses in which they enroll. In addition to an advisory system, if better enrollment procedures were instituted, the problems of an early dropout might be alleviated. It is clear that if correspondence courses are to help the enrolled students, more information on student goals and motivation must be collected and made available to the instructors.

The conflict between students who appear to want only credit for the course and the instructor who expects the student to become proficient in the field was often mentioned. They felt less able to deal with this conflict in correspondence courses than in residence classes, because in the latter they were able to bring motivational factors into play, while in correspondence studies they were limited to bureaucratic procedures.

d. The most recurring suggestion for improving correspondence courses was that the course be revised frequently and kept up to date and that a good text be selected. It was also viewed as essential that interesting, imaginative questions be used in lessons rather than questions which simply required a parroting back of information

that the student supposedly had already digested. What is needed is a synthesis of the learned materials and the student's experience rather than just an indication of what materials had been memorized.

/ Editorial Comment: Improvements in the instruction of correspondence courses have been suggested throughout the course of this report. It has been suggested that use be made of audio-visual materials, frequent revisions of syllabi, selection of up-to-date textbooks, better and more extensive comments on questions, more meaningful selection of questions, student advising, programmed texts, the deletion of the rule or tradition of the number of lessons to be turned in by students for each credit hour, and the like. In many ways, the instructors' suggestions for the improvement of instruction exhibited considerable predictability. Many instructors in languages would put lessons on tapes and records to add the oral dimension often missing from correspondence studies. Education professors wanted to include direct observation of school situations. Historians claimed the need of large libraries. In short, instructors attempted to transfer to correspondence courses the conditions that they had found successful in their work on campus. Those instructors who used audio-visual aids on campus wished it might be possible to incorporate some films or slides in correspondence courses. Independent study and programmed instruction were also mentioned a large number of times as worthy of experimentation if a determined effort were to be mounted to explore methods of improving the teaching-learning process. /

3. Responsibilities for Correspondence Program

Instructors found justification for correspondence courses on their campuses by referring to the fact that some students lived in isolation or that some students, who would normally be able to appear on their campuses, were not able to do so because of illness, a handicap, etc. In addition, housewives, businessmen, teachers, and other public workers were frequently mentioned as the benefactors to whom the adult education opportunity represented by correspondence courses was most applicable.

Many instructors thought that community colleges could take up some of the load now carried by the correspondence and extension programs. They also suggested that they would prefer to see the responsibilities for instruction of lower-division correspondence courses (100 and 200 level courses) transferred to the community colleges. This would entail a modification of one of the community college goals. Were the lower-division courses to be transferred to the community college, the instructors saw a much greater opportunity for the four-year institutions to concentrate on upper-division correspondence courses with attendant modifications to make the system more viable. Some instructors, however, voiced concern that students may not enroll in correspondence courses which were offered by the less prestigious community colleges. Many faculty members also felt that were they able to concentrate upon upper-division correspondence courses, they might feel freer to experiment with various teaching methodologies. They might, for example, be more prone to offer

an independent study course rather than a traditional correspondence course. The faculty members, however, would insist that such things as conference calls be made available to them so that they could check on the progress of these students.

The possibility was proferred of using correspondence studies as a vehicle to offer higher education to those ethnic and economic groups that have been by-passed in higher education. /Editorial Comment: Serious consideration should be given to the ramifications of offering correspondence courses to members of the aforementioned groups. Courses by correspondence should not be offered unless drastic changes can be made in their methodology and content. One concern is that given the expectations of people in these groups being exposed to an inadequate and often antiquated teaching method may well discourage them from pursuing higher education. It is also highly probable that other members of these groups would be informed of the basic deficiencies in instruction. Not only must special courses be designed -- were courses to be offered to students from the aforementioned groups -- but those courses must also use the best possible teaching methods available today./

Offering courses by correspondence adds flexibility to the curricular offerings of the institution. It is a valuable public relations effort but it also has a bad public image in the minds of some instructors who consider it a dilution of their work of imparting knowledge, maintaining high standards of competence, etc., and in the minds of the consumers

who, over the years, have found it a rather boring learning experience. It would be ludicrous to believe that the experiences of 60 per cent of the students who do not complete correspondence courses would not be relayed to their acquaintances. In other words, by presenting a course which is not designed as well as it could or should be, a residual bad public image is created in the minds of its consumers.

4. Coordination of Correspondence Program

The interviewees seemed to feel that there was no effective recruitment policy in existence at their institutions today. The tendency has been to recruit junior faculty for the job rather than to recruit the most qualified people in the department to teach correspondence courses. With a few exceptions, instructors reported that they had inherited the correspondence courses over which they had responsibilities. Most felt that they could not have avoided accepting the responsibility because they had been junior members of their departments, or they needed the extra revenue, or they were the only ones having the necessary expertise to teach the courses. A few expressed the notion that there was a measure of professional obligation they could not evade.

Instructors frequently expressed concern that their time and talents were not being utilized effectively in correspondence courses. The contrast of spending one hour correcting one student's lesson to lecturing 40 or 50 students for one hour was given as an example requiring a high level administrative decision on the allocation of institutional resources.

The evident duplication of correspondence courses offered by institutions of higher education in the state was seen as another area in which effective coordination was needed.

All instructors said that the state had a definite commitment to its citizens which it could not evade. The interviewees gave a number of diverse ways in which the correspondence program could be organized to be more effective. Arranged in a descending hierarchical order by level of centralization these suggestions are:

a. The state could establish a central organization whose sole responsibility would be correspondence and continuing educational services. Such a centralized office would hire faculty for those purposes. The administration of such an organization must be experimentally oriented. That is, it should be willing and able to encourage its faculty members to innovate. It is realized that a centralized organization of this sort must receive state assistance.

There are, of course, a number of apparent disadvantages to such a centralized organization. For example, individual departments at resident institutions might have even less authority to structure correspondence courses so that they contain much the same material as comparable resident courses.

b. The directors of the divisions of correspondence studies in the state should be empowered to look seriously at duplications

of courses with a view towards eliminating them and making a single institution responsible for those courses.

c. A continuation of the present system.

d. Even more decentralization than currently exists by inviting the participation of the community colleges in the correspondence enterprise.

/ Editorial Comment: One final recommendation would seem to be in order. Assuming that the state is morally committed to offer its citizens some form of correspondence courses for college credit, and assuming that continual efforts should be made to improve upon the quality of the course offerings, it is imperative that the state provide monetary support. This support is mandatory in view of the fact that correspondence courses can not continue to be offered on a self-sustaining basis.

It is readily apparent that the quality of courses can not be improved without additional costs. It is readily apparent that experimental programs can not be undertaken without additional costs. It is readily apparent that increases in remuneration can not be accomplished without additional costs. It is readily apparent, in short, that to improve correspondence instruction, one must face additional costs.

What is not so transparent at first blush is that if the quality of correspondence instruction is improved and if the improvement results in more students completing more lessons, the divisions of correspondence

studies will stare eyeball to eyeball with a dilemna. The various divisions are currently self-sustaining because, unlike any other educational and most business enterprises, they depend upon a high rate of failure to remain solvent. A decrease in the rate of failure, i.e., an increase in the proportion of students who complete lessons, will mean increases in instructional costs. These increases, in turn, will inevitably lead to a decrease in the total funds available to the divisions for experimentation, remunerations, etc.

In short, without outside support, correspondence studies will be driven into extinction if they increase the quality of courses and increase the success-to-failure ratio. To recoup these losses, either the fees charged for courses will have to be increased or outside assistance will have to be found. An increase in course fees is undesirable since it will not only result in a decrease in enrollment, but also make correspondence studies available only to the more affluent.

It is certain that drastic changes must be made to make correspondence studies a more viable educational tool. If changes can not be made, it is recommended that correspondence studies be allowed to wither on the vine. But the demise of correspondence studies will be a severe blow to those who can most readily pursue higher education only by that vehicle.]

VIII. FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND COMMENTS

It was clear throughout the course of this study that the correspondence system needs to be changed if it is to survive. In order to effectively evaluate and implement any or all of the recommendations, certain facts must be kept in mind.

First, this report contains a summary of faculty and administrator's attitudes only. It does not contain any information on student attitudes. While it would be possible and desirable to pursue some of the recommendations without probing student attitudes, the resultant effects of any change or changes should be evaluated through the second phase of this study (probing student attitudes) and through gathering enough objective data to make it possible to detect any resultant effects of the implemented changes.

Second, an agency should be funded and established to: (1) provide the expertise necessary to implement and evaluate any changes, (2) evaluate student characteristics, progress, and success, (3) conduct studies, and (4) make recommendations for other changes.

Third, a concerted effort must be made to obtain state or federal funding for correspondence courses.

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